CLAIMS

1.   A method for establishing a channel-based network for accessing the Internet comprising:

storing a channel table in a system server connected to the Internet, wherein the channel table includes a plurality of Internet addresses having corresponding channel numbers and corresponding channel names; and

downloading the channel table from the system server to a user terminal using a satellite system.

2.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

retrieving an Internet address from the channel table downloaded to the user terminal in response to a channel number or channel name selected by a user; and

transmitting the Internet address from the user terminal to the Internet.

3.   The method of Claim 2, further comprising transmitting information from an Internet site associated with the Internet address to the user terminal by the satellite system.

4.   The method of Claim 2, wherein the Internet address is transmitted from the user terminal to the Internet by a terrestrial communication system.

5.   The method of Claim 2, wherein the Internet address is transmitted from the user terminal to the Internet by the satellite system.

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising:

transmitting information from the user terminal to the Internet by the satellite system at a first bandwidth; and

transmitting information from the Internet to the user terminal by the satellite system at a second bandwidth, wherein the first bandwidth is about equal to the second bandwidth.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising:

transmitting user identification information from the user terminal to the system server;

comparing the transmitted user identification information with authorized user identification information stored in the system server; and

transmitting an authorization code from the system server to the user terminal only if the transmitted user identification information matches the authorized user identification information, the authorization code being transmitted by the satellite system.

8. The method of Claim 7, further comprising reading the user identification information from a smart card inserted in a socket of the user terminal.

9. The method of Claim 6, further comprising:

transmitting terminal identification information from the user terminal to the system server;

comparing the transmitted terminal identification information with authorized terminal identification information stored in the system server;

transmitting an authorization code from the system
server to the user terminal only if the transmitted
terminal identification information matches the
authorized terminal identification information, the
authorization code being transmitted by the satellite
system.

10.   The method of Claim 9, further comprising reading
the terminal identification information from an asset
manager memory of the user terminal.

11.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
      encrypting the channel table before storing the
channel table in the system server; and
      decrypting the channel table in the user terminal.

12.   A user terminal for accessing the Internet through
a channel-based network, the user terminal comprising:
      a communications port for providing downstream
access from the Internet by a satellite communication
system; and
      a channel table memory coupled to the
communications port, wherein the channel table memory
stores a channel table downloaded from a system server
coupled to the Internet, the channel table including a
plurality of Internet addresses having corresponding
channel numbers and corresponding channel names.

13.   The user terminal of Claim 12, further comprising
a second communications port for providing upstream access
to the Internet by a terrestrial communication system, the

second communications port being coupled to the channel table memory.

14.   The user terminal of Claim 12, wherein the communications port is configured to provide upstream access to the Internet by the satellite communication system.

15.   A system for accessing the Internet through a channel-based network, the system comprising:

   a system server coupled to the Internet, wherein the system server is configured to store a channel table having a plurality of Internet addresses with corresponding channel numbers and corresponding channel names;

   a satellite communications system coupled to the Internet; and

   a user terminal having a communications port configured to download the channel table from system server via the Internet and the satellite communications system, and a channel table memory that stores the downloaded channel table.

16.   The system of Claim 15, further comprising a terrestrial communications system coupled to the Internet, wherein the user terminal further includes a second communications port coupled to the terrestrial communications system, the second communications port providing upstream access to the Internet via the terrestrial communication system.

17.   The system of Claim 15, wherein the communications port is further configured to provide upstream access to the Internet by the satellite communication system.

18.   The system of Claim 17, wherein upstream access bandwidth from the communication port to the satellite system is approximately equal to downstream access bandwidth from the satellite system to the communication port.